

Connecticut State Medical Society
Connecticut Urology Society

February 19, 2013

Written Testimony for the Insurance Committee
Supporting
HB 5644 An Act Requiring Health Insurance Coverage for Fertility Preservation

Good Morning, Senator Crisco, Representative Megna and other distinguished members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee. For the record, my name is Dr. Art Tarantino, I am a board certified urologist practicing in Hartford and I am here as president-elect of the Connecticut Urology Society, an organization that represents over 90% of practicing urologists in our state and on behalf of the Connecticut State Medical Society to support of the concept of House Bill 5644 An Act Concerning Fertility Preservation. CSMS and CUS welcomes the opportunity to engage in continued dialog and hopefully provide some insight and medical knowledge that would influence any legislation requiring health insurance coverage of fertility preservation for insured's facing likely infertility as a result of a necessary medical procedure for insured with cancer and other medical conditions.

CSMS and CUS fully believe that every Connecticut resident should have the ability to experience a quality of life that today's medical science can provide for those who have been diagnosed with life threatening conditions, including cancer, without limiting their hopes and dreams or prospects of having a family. Unfortunately there are an increasing number of patients who are diagnosed early in their lives with certain kinds of cancers that jeopardize their ability to conceive children. When faced with a question that has a lifelong and life altering impact on their lives- the future ability to conceive a child, the medically necessary surgical or medical treatments are often delayed by these patients. Unfortunately this fear often times leads to a delay or even worse, a total rejection of treatment which could lead to a more significant impact, including death.

Moreover, some patients, when informed of the possibility of being sterile, having reduced sperm count or loss of fertility due to chemotherapy and are provided with education to make an informed decision on options to preserve their ability to have children later in life by their treating physicians, often find that their futures are limited by their health insurer and find that their policy does not cover this important component of treatment- the preservation of the ability to have biological children later in life.

It is a fact that the costs do differ by gender, with women often experiencing much more significant costs than men. These costs for both genders are tied to extraction, storage and maintenance of the sperm or egg and could result in as much as a few thousands of dollars of patient expense. Often this expense is too great for many individuals, especially women to bear and they often reluctantly forgo the maintenance procedure of extraction because of this. Some even delay actual clinical treatment of the underlying medical condition in an attempt to get pregnant (or get their spouse pregnant) before undergoing treatment for their disease. This delay and even the pregnancy may cause additional complications in medical treatment, potentially threatening both the patient and the fetus, and almost always medical treatment cannot be initiated until the patient has finished the pregnancy.

House Bill 5644 is a significant piece of legislation that would require, in those rare situations, in which men and women who have been diagnosed and are facing infertility as the result of medically necessary and possibly life threatening procedures have the opportunity to ensure that later in life, when they are ready, they can attempt to have children of their own. We urge you to support HB 5644 so that medically necessary treatments can be provided to these patients without the fear of loss of their ability to have children later in life.